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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6622
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE 0147
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0561
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 4095
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 7651
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 5210
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0996
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000972

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, IO, AND EUR
PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM JA FR GM BM

SUBJECT: BURMA: REGIME ACTIONS HARDEN JAPANESE, FRENCH,
GERMAN ANGER

REF: RANGOON 948 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: DCM Karl Stoltz for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Journalists and diplomats in Rangoon are scrambling to get read-outs on Gambari's September 30-October 2 visit to Burma, but the senior UN official in Burma will not offer many insights (septel). The Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister could not meet with many senior officials during his nearly simultaneous visit with Gambari. However, the GOB agreed to turn over the body of murdered photojournalist Kenji Nagai, but not his video camera. Japan is seething over the incident and the regime's treatment of their DFM, and may announce new cuts in development assistance in Tokyo today or tomorrow. End summary.

¶2. (C) In an October 3 meeting with Japanese DCM Tetsuo Amano, French DCM Emmanuel Mouriez and German DCM Ralf Timmermann, DCM said the U.S. Embassy heard that UN Resident Coordinator Charles Petrie met with selected EU Ambassadors on the evening of October 2, shortly after UN envoy Ibrahim Gambari departed Rangoon. Mouriez confirmed that the French Ambassador met Petrie that night, but said the meeting offered no details on Gambari's visit. According to Mouriez, Petrie told the French Ambassador that he was under instructions to say nothing until Gambari's return to New York. Amano expressed great surprise to learn of the French Ambassador's meeting with Petrie, since he said Petrie told the Japanese he could not meet anyone until Friday morning, when he planned to meet with Chief of Mission from the U.S., U.K., France, China, Germany, and Japan. Timmermann was not aware of any recent meeting between Petrie and the German Ambassador.

¶3. (C) Amano described the outcome of the Sept. 29-Oct. 2 visit by Deputy Foreign Minister Yabunaka as "disappointing." The focus of Yabunaka's visit, which had been scheduled before the regime crackdown on peaceful protesters last week, shifted in reaction to those events. Yabunaka pressed for GOB protection of Japanese nationals and sought an apology for the slaying of Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai. Initially, Amano said, the highest level official who would

meet Yabunaka was Colonel Aye Ko, a Deputy Director-General in the Defense Ministry's Office of Military Security Affairs. Col. Aye Ko, Amano related, initially claimed that international media accounts of Nagai's death were "confused" and suggested the fatal bullet might have "bent," or ricocheted, to strike him down. The Deputy Minister responded by presenting photographic and video evidence that Nagai was shot by a Burmese Army soldier at point-blank range.

¶4. (C) After intense Embassy efforts, Minister of Information Kyaw Hsan and Deputy Foreign Minister Maung Myint agreed to meet with Yabunaka as well. According to Amano, the GOB claimed that all other officials were "too busy" with Gambari's visit. Maung Myint offered a formal apology for the shooting and agreed to facilitate Japanese recovery of Nagai's remains, but only after a three-day struggle to obtain a visa to Nagai's employer, the chairman of APF News Inc. Amano said the APF chairman only received a visa after promising that he was only coming to the country to recover his correspondent's body, and that he would not conduct any reporting while in Burma. Nagai's family departed Burma on October 2 with his remains and most of his possessions, except for the camera that Nagai was holding when he was shot down. When pressed by the Japanese, the GOB claimed they could not find the camera and suggested that "it might have been pocketed by one of the soldiers who took his body to the hospital."

¶5. (C) Yabunaka also delivered a message from the G-8 that he was asked to convey after attending their meeting last week in New York, calling on the GOB to refrain from killing and using force on peaceful demonstrators, to release all

RANGOON 00000972 002 OF 002

recent detainees and other political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi, and to begin a dialogue seeking reconciliation with the democratic opposition immediately. Yabunaka also pressed for a one-on-one meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, but received no response from the regime.

¶6. (C) Yabunaka plans to brief Japanese Foreign Minister Komura upon his return to Tokyo today. Amano said he expects that the Japanese Foreign Ministry will announce an end to bilateral development aid, including training and technology transfers, although it will continue to provide humanitarian assistance. He said Japan was not considering other economic sanctions. Some investment and commercial ties could also be cut, he said, but he felt this would have little impact since there is "very little Japanese investment in Burma today."

¶7. (C) Amano also quietly confirmed that one Burmese national employee of the Japanese Embassy disappeared on September 28. The employee was observing a public demonstration near a Rangoon monastery and was arrested after Burmese armed forces attacked the crowd because he was "slower than the other protesters." He did not have any camera, cellphone, or electronic devices on his person but still vanished. After several days of searching, the Japanese Embassy received confirmation today that he is being held with hundreds of other prisoners at the GTI detention center in Insein township. The GOB has promised the Japanese that he will be released "by Monday" if his case is not made public, so Amano asked that we keep this information confidential.

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¶8. (C) Mouriez and Timmermann joined Amano in expressing their outrage at the regime's recent actions, particularly the brutal treatment of monks. Mouriez said the French believe that the death toll from the regime's night-time raids on monasteries was higher than the number shot by soldiers on the streets, although he did not have hard evidence. Amano related an unconfirmed report that one devoutly Buddhist soldier, when ordered to shoot a kneeling

monk last week, had instead turned his rifle on himself and committed suicide.

¶9. (C) All three DCMs agreed that the regime's recent brutality destroyed any of its remaining international credibility. Timmermann confirmed that the Frederick Ebert Stiftung had organized the EU-ASEAN "Track Two" meeting in Lashio to which the regime exiled Gambari on October 1, but added that "those who have argued for so long for dialogue with Than Shwe are very silent now." None of the three DCMs saw an immediate cause for hope, and all three agreed their countries were more committed than ever to make a change happen. Mouriez said that the people of Burma no longer look for the outside world to save them and know they must save themselves, but "they do not know what to do next."

¶10. (C) COMMENT: All three DCMs expressed an interest in sharing their information more frequently about ongoing killings, disappearances, and arrests inside Burma, and about steps their capitals are considering to apply additional pressure. Mouriez promised to update us on EU discussions in Brussels on expanded sanctions and visa bans. We plan to meet again early next week and to add UK, Australian, and South Korean diplomats to the group. Since the regime cut off most Internet service, many missions in Rangoon are grasping for information. We will do what we can to help them see through the regime's smokescreens and report the truth about what is happening to the people of Burma. End comment.

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